



City of Seattle

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Greg Nickels, Mayor  
**Department of Planning and Development**  
Diane Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE  
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Application Number:** 2307721  
**Applicant Name:** Norman Yelin for Marvin Lester  
**Address of Proposal:** 4720 Beacon Avenue South

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Master Use Permit to alter an existing single family dwelling unit and establish use as a one-story, two-unit apartment building. Accessory surface parking for two vehicles will be provided on site in the rear setback.

The following Master User Permit component is required:

**Administrative Conditional Use** - To allow single-purpose residence (two-unit apartment) in a Neighborhood Commercial Two zone. (SMC 23.47.016.B.5)

**SEPA DETERMINATION** ☒ Exempt ☐ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS

☐ DNS with conditions

☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or  
involving another agency with jurisdiction

## **BACKGROUND DATA**

### **Site and Vicinity Description**

The subject property is an interior lot located between Cheasty Boulevard South and South Angeline Street on the eastside of Beacon Avenue South, in the Beacon Hill neighborhood. The subject site is nearly rectangular in shape, with its lengthwise orientation running east/west. The site encompasses a land area of approximately 6,122 square feet in a Neighborhood Commercial Two with a height limit of 40 feet (NC2 - 40) zone. The site slopes abruptly upward from Beacon Avenue South and levels out 10 feet beyond the front property boundary line. A four foot concrete block retaining wall supports the elevated grade change along Beacon Avenue South. A modestly sized one-story single family building with partially above grade basement and large storage shed are the only structures on the development site. The single story residential building with elevated basement was constructed during the 1920's and occupies an area of approximately 1,341 sq. ft. The existing 462.25 sq. ft. accessory structure is located at the development site's rear northeast corner. The land surface at the site is comprised mostly of crushed rock with grass along the perimeter. The site is sparsely vegetated with one mature evergreen tree and several scrubs. Surface parking is currently located in the front and rear setback. Access to the development site is obtained through a 12 foot wide driveway abutting Beacon Avenue South, a primary arterial situated along the north/south axis. Beacon Avenue South connects the south end of Seattle to the International District with connecting thoroughfares to Downtown, and Capitol Hill neighborhoods



The subject site is situated within 65 feet of the northern edge of the NC2-40 zone. The NC2-40 zone stretches approximately 850 feet south along this portion of the Beacon Avenue South corridor. The width of the NC2-40 zoning band averages 360 feet in this area. One and two-story structures are typical along this stretch of Beacon Avenue South. A mixed of commercial and residential uses are sited in the area. This area is underdeveloped with regards to footprint coverage for commercial uses in the zone. A two-story office building is immediately located to the north of the subject site, to the south a two-story apartment building is established. Commercial uses including a gas station, retail, and restaurants are concentrated around the intersection of South Columbia Way and Beacon Avenue South, approximately one block south of the subject site. The intersection is just south of the center for the NC2-40 zone along the north/south axis. Residential developments dominate the uses outside this small zoning band along Beacon Avenue South surrounding the aforementioned intersections. Immediately to the north, south, west and abutting the subject site to the east is an expansive Single Family 5000 (SF 5000) zone. Modest post WWII residential structures dominate this moderately dense Beacon Hill residential neighborhood. Puget Sound Health Care System's Veterans Administration Hospital is located to the northwest of the subject lot, approximately 350 feet away. Located

due north of the development site is the City of Seattle Parks & Recreation Department's Jefferson Park Golf Course.

### **Proposal Description**

The applicant proposes to establish a two-unit apartment building by converting a partially below grade 820 square foot basement into a residential unit within an existing single family structure. The conversion of the basement would change the existing single family residence into an apartment use (single purpose residential use). Parking for two vehicles will be provided in the rear with landscaped open space provided in the front and rear. The owner seeks to remedy a problem they inherited at the time of purchase of the property. After the recent purchase of the property the new owner discovered he had acquired a property that did not have a legally establish second unit within the structure.

### **Public Comment**

Date of Notice of Application:	December 11, 2003
Date End of Comment Period:	December 24, 2003
# Letter(s) Received	1

Issues: Prior to the DPD non-permitted conversion of the single family residential structure to a two unit apartment house a neighbor noted that the front setback area was landscaped. Further the neighbor stated that the front setback area was now used for parking and requested greater sensitivity to the streetscape with the reintroduction of landscaping in the front. The Land Use Code addresses the aforementioned concerns and will require parking behind landscaped areas.

### **ANALYSIS - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE**

The proposal is to convert an existing single-family residence into a two-unit apartment house (single purpose residential use), on a lot zoned NC2-40. The establishment of single purpose residential uses otherwise permitted or exempted as provided in Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 23.47.004.E in NC2 zones requires approval of an administrative conditional use permit pursuant to the criteria identified at SMC Section 23.47.006.B.4. The applicable criteria are listed below and followed by brief discussion of the project's consistency with each criterion.

(a) *Due to location or parcel size, the proposed site is not suited for commercial development; or*

The applicant proposes to convert a portion of an existing building to establish a second residential use. The specific location of action will occur within a partially below grade basement. The reuse of the space is designed to provide additional affordable housing opportunities in this south end neighborhood. As was previous noted the rectangular shaped

lot comprises a land area of approximately 6,122 square feet. Currently 29% of the site is developed with structures. The existing residential structure and accessory storage shed are approximately four feet above the existing sidewalk grade. The residential structure sits on average approximately 30 feet from the front property line. The owner wishes to maintain the existing structure with interior modifications to establish a residential use in the basement level.

The existing building neither establishes a commercial presence nor does it have much impact on the adjacent uses. Typically commercial structures in NC zones are sited at street level, closer to the front property line.

If redevelopment included a physical expansion of the structure's footprint, especially between the front property line and the existing structure's front façade, then a commercial use could be added to the development site. The subject lot could support, at the minimum, an addition that meets relationship to grade, vertical and horizontal clearances for commercial uses. Although, the owner is proposing something much smaller in scope, this type of non-residential addition could be constructed later. Provided the existing structure is to remain, the site is not well suited for most non-residential uses.

*(b) There is substantial excess supply of land available for commercial use near the proposed site, evidenced by such conditions as a lack of commercial activity in existing commercial structures for a sustained period, commercial structures in disrepair, and vacant or underused commercially zoned land: provided that single-purpose residential development shall not interrupt an established commercial street front. As used in this subsection, an "established commercial street front" may be intersected by streets or alleys, and some lots with no current commercial use.*

Commercial structures within the NC2-40 along this stretch of Beacon Avenue South were generally constructed between the 1940's and 1970's. There are no vacant lots within this commercial zoning boundary area. However, there are a substantial number of lots with established commercial uses that are underdeveloped with relationship to lot coverage. Many of those structures are in a state of disrepair. A few exceptions have been noted in the area. The property immediately north of the subject site has recently undergone renovations improving exterior façade and interior space. The two-story commercial building is currently occupied by a church and office uses. A Texaco gas station with food store is located south of the development site at the northeast corner of intersection of the South Columbian Way and Beacon Avenue South. Restaurants, grocery, and produce markets round out the rest of the commercial uses along this NC2 corridor. Two sites located at the northwest corner and southeast corner of the aforementioned intersection have been converted from gas stations to retail uses. Beacon Avenue South is an active street conveying traffic along the north/south axis.

Currently interspersed in this commercial area are five lots in residential use, including the development site. Four of the residential uses are located on the same block as the subject site. Three residential sites are developed with apartment buildings that are old, two of

which are in relatively good condition while one is need of repair. Two apartment structures are located directly across the street from the subject lot, while the third is abutting the subject lot to the south. The block has a distinct residential presence with the proximity of the structures' bulk and mass frontage along Beacon Avenue South. The remaining two development sites on the block are commercial uses anchoring opposite corners, one located to the north, the other to the south. The block itself lacks a commercial presence. The addition of another residential unit within the existing structure would not interrupt and take away from the established commercial frontage. Thus, the second criterion is satisfied.

### **Conclusion**

Application of the conditional use criteria to the subject site leads to the conclusion that the increase of one residential unit within an existing structure should be permitted. With no increases proposed to the development site's lot coverage in residential use, there is expected no perceivable intrusion on the commercial area. Future development could support commercial use and would be encouraged if an increase in the footprint of the structure were proposed. As currently proposed no adverse impacts requiring mitigation pursuant to the conditional use authority have been identified.

### **DECISION - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT**

This application to convert a single family residence into a two unit apartment (single-purpose residential) in a Neighborhood Commercial 2 with a height limit 40 zone as depicted in the Master Use Permit drawings dated, March 2, 2004 is **CONDITIONALLY APPROVED.**

### **CONDITIONS - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE**

#### **Prior to Final Inspection:**

1. Compliance with the approved design features and elements, including landscaping improvements, shall be verified by the DPD Planner assigned to this project. Inspection appointments with the Planner must be made at least 3 working days in advance of the inspection.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (signature on file) Date: March 18, 2004  
Bradley Wilburn, Land Use Planner  
Land Use Services  
Department of Planning and Development

BW:bg

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